

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 26, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The attached memorandum from the State Department provides a useful summary of the 17th General Assembly of the United Nations. You may wish to glance at it before your session with the press on Friday.

The memorandum points out that we did rather better than we expected in the General Assembly this time -- partly because of the care with which we prepared and argued our positions, and even more perhaps because of the impact on the General Assembly of the Cuban affair and the Sino-Indian hostilities.

The chief unfinished business is the problem of UN financing. Resolutions passed on December 19 (1) accepted the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that assessments for the Congo and Middle East operations constituted binding legal obligations on the members of the UN; and (2) established a 21-member working party to make recommendations on the financing of these peace-keeping operations beyond July 1, 1963 (up to that time, the expenses will be covered by the bond issue). The working party is instructed to report no later than March 31.

The Department has under preparation a memorandum outlining the position the US expects to press on the working party. This memorandum will, of course, take congressional and domestic reactions into account. It should be ready for you in a few days.



Arthur Schlesinger, jr.

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

December 24, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: The 17th General Assembly:
A Summary Round-Up.

I.

The 17th General Assembly shaped up rather better than we predicted in the Strategy Paper which formed the basis for the United States Delegation's marching orders. Our main objectives for this session were achieved. We avoided predicted trouble in the debates on nuclear issues and outer space. We successfully walked the tightrope on such ticklish matters as Palestine Refugees, Angola, and Population policies. We had predicted trouble on colonialism in the form of extreme resolutions on Portugal, and South Africa which were adopted over our opposition. Above all, we succeeded in strengthening the Organization's capacity to act in several significant ways.

We hope that part of the reason for this outcome was the major effort we put into advanced planning both in Washington and in New York; the thorough consultations we had in Europe and elsewhere on specific issues ahead of time; the three intensive months of first-rate politicking and advocacy by an outstandingly professional delegation in New York; and the speed with which both the White House and the Department were prepared to consider and decide the major policy issues on which Ambassador Stevenson required guidance from Washington.

But

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But perhaps the most important reason for the good results in this Assembly, from the United States point of view, was the effect inside the General Assembly of two external events: the Cuban crisis and the invasion of India. To be realistic, the 17th General Assembly must be described in terms of the impact of these two concurrent peace-and-security crises. This much at least can be said:

-- The normal Soviet stridency was muted. The Soviet Delegation was in some disarray; it seemed to go back to Moscow more frequently than before for instructions on small points. This was particularly noticeable on the nuclear issues and in the outer space debate.

-- The damage which the Cuban missiles did to the credibility of Soviet statements was pervasive. By contrast, it helped to increase confidence in the words, and the actions, of the United States.

-- The Latin American caucus, confused and leaderless before the Assembly got under way, coalesced into a more effective political grouping after the demonstration of unanimity in the OAS vote on Cuba. This was particularly notable on issues like Disarmament and Nuclear Testing where the security of the free world was more obviously at stake. The Latin American consensus fell apart, however, on some colonial issues.

-- The Western Europeans were much more active this year than last, and much more successful in getting their way -- except on some colonial matters. This was quite directly the result of our working, bilaterally and through the North Atlantic Council, to energize our European allies on General Assembly matters.

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-- There was sharp shift in the sub-surface attitude of the Indian Delegation. Where, as on Chinese Representation, a cultural lag resulted in a neutral Indian vote, the Delegation's lack of enthusiasm for its own role was evident. India voted with us on Hungary and Korea for the first time.

-- The dramatic demonstration, in Cuba, that aerial photographs could contribute to maintaining world peace took the fire out of the predicted Donnybrook Fair over observation satellites during the Outer Space debate.

-- The Assembly was somewhat more willing to stand up and be counted on the "anti-Communist" issues. The Soviet position on Korea took an exceptional drubbing. And there were more references to Soviet colonialism and imperialism, with fewer Communist rebuttals and less neutralist yawning, than in recent years.

-- The neutrals were busily engaged in agonizing reappraisals of their own policies. The outcome is unclear, but the reassessment will doubtless reinforce the central place which the United Nations occupies in protecting the interests of the world's smaller and weaker nations.

Thus while events in the Cuban sunshine and the Himalayan mists never reached the agenda of the General Assembly, the drama of that Security Council confrontation and the spectacle of the world's leading neutrals appealing for Western military aid was deeply felt on all the major items of parliamentary diplomacy this season.

II.

Our Strategy Paper emphasized that we should look upon the 17th General Assembly as a period of consolidation as distinguished from a platform of

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new initiatives -- that we should concentrate on strengthening existing machinery for nation-building, peaceful settlement, and peacekeeping.

Much of this machinery, of course, goes on without requiring Assembly action from year to year except to finance it. United Nations Technical Assistance activity was carried on in 109 countries; The expanding Special Fund (of which Paul Hoffman was reelected Managing Director by this General Assembly) touched 88 countries; and the effort to make sense out of the Specialized Agencies' work, country by country, has now placed a coordinating UN technical aid "presence" in more than 50 countries; many of these UN representatives also serve in practice as informal political advisers to new governments trying to decide how to use what kinds of external aid.

The several United Nations peacekeeping operations have continued -- without much attention from the Assembly -- in the Congo, the Middle East, Korea, and Kashmir. The idea of a UN presence to help resolve secondary security threats continues to spread -- the UN's executive attention has been engaged this year in the West New Guinea transfer, and in the Thailand-Cambodia dispute; the Secretary General may also be asked to supervise the disengagement of the UAR and Saudi Arabia from Yemen. And the 17th General Assembly extended the concept of a UN presence to British-protected Oman and South Africa's mandated territory of South West Africa.

In strengthening the United Nations machinery, the high-light actions were these:

-- The unopposed election of U Thant for a full term, with an eloquent silence about the Troika, except for a plaintive "history will prove us right" from the Soviets.

-- The consequent assurance that there will be no radical upset in staffing patterns in the Secretariat.

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-- The World Court's opinion on UN peace-keeping expenses in the Congo and the Middle East was accepted by an overwhelming majority (76-17-8) in spite of French and Soviet opposition.

-- Unanimous approval of steps toward a UN Institute to train international operators, conciliators, and peacekeepers.

-- An increase (from \$25 million to \$40 million) in the UN's Working Capital Fund.

III.

On disarmament, nuclear testing, and outer space, United States objectives were fully achieved and the 17th General Assembly behaved in a noticeably more restrained manner than the 16th Assembly did.

The disarmament debate was referred back to Geneva, where we wanted it.

On nuclear testing, one resolution clearly endorsed the US-UK comprehensive test ban proposal. The other, which started out as an uninspected ban, was amended to make it acceptably ambiguous; we even got in a reference to verification.

On outer space, the Assembly pushed along the cooperative arrangements in scientific research, meteorology, and communications. The Soviets started with a proposal for "general principles" of space law, but was discouraged from pressing the matter when we came up with our own set of "principles".

IV.

Colonialism is the only area in which we emerged with a spattering of egg on the face. We had to vote against an extreme resolution

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on apartheid (because it called for sanctions) and another extreme resolution on Angola (because it called, in effect, for ejecting Portugal from NATO). Our effort to get a United Nations rapporteur for the Portuguese territories brought the Portuguese a little farther than they had intended to go -- but not far enough to satisfy the dominant opinion among the Africans.

The continuing fireworks between the Africans and the colonial powers, focusing more and more in the Decolonization Committee (formerly the Committee of 17, now 24), will continue to present our most difficult UN dilemmas. We may soon need to face the question whether we should get into the middle of each colonial question at the committee stage.

But outcroppings of moderation about the unfinished business of decolonization were also in evidence. We were able to help get a relatively mild resolution on South West Africa (which proposes a UN presence there), and we succeeded again in eliminating from the annual omnibus resolution against colonialism a dangerous section calling for target dates to be set for each territory not yet free.

The General Assembly continued to make quite a distinction between South Africans and the Portuguese as unregenerate, and the British who are regarded as trying, though not hard enough, to get on with the decolonization process. We abstained on two resolutions about Southern Rhodesia, which urged the UK to do what it was unwilling (and now, with Whitehead's surprising defeat, will be unable) to do.

As the number, if not the intensity, of colonial issues declines, the Soviet empire stands out more and more prominently on the horizon. Last year our long and careful statement on Soviet colonialism was well received but not widely echoed. This year during

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the debates on colonialism, some ten delegations made a point of referring to the dependent status of Soviet satellites, and to the subject peoples inside the Soviet Union itself.

V.

The Chinese Representation vote came out even better than last year, with no challenge to the "important question" issue.

The Soviet move to seat a representative of North Korea during the debate on the Korean item was resoundingly defeated. Our resolution reaffirming the United States position on Korean unification attracted 55 votes, against the 45 with which it was passed last year.

The Hungarian item was kept on the UN's action agenda in a way that should be both more popular and more effective. The Secretary General will now try to achieve at least an amnesty for the 1956 Freedom Fighters.

VI.

Under the general umbrella of the Decade of Development, the United Nations in 1962:

- Joined with the FAO in the World Food Program;

- Completed plans for the UN Conference in Geneva in February, on the application of science and technology for the benefit of less developed areas;

- Called a world trade conference for 1964 that will present major political dangers and also opportunities for the Atlantic nations;

-- Started

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-- Started building regional economic development institutes in Latin America, Africa, and Asia;

-- Struggled with the population dilemma by formally recognizing its importance but voting against UN technical aid for population control;

-- Completed the UN Convention on Marriage; and

-- Passed a remarkably good declaration on "Sovereignty Over Natural Resources" which affirms the importance and the legal rights of private investors in the less developed countries.

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A detailed summary of the main issues in the 17th General Assembly is appended for your information.

Dean Rusk

Dean Rusk

Enclosure:

Paper entitled "Analysis of the Principal Actions at the 17th General Assembly".

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